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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TBILISI 000432

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RU](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEW UNOMIG MANDATE

REF: A. TBILISI 321

[B](#). TBILISI 171

[C](#). TBILISI 82

[D](#). TBILISI 358

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and comment. UN Special Representative Verbeke has twice convened the British, French, German and U.S. chiefs of mission to brainstorm ideas for a new UN mission in Georgia. Taking for granted the eventual closure of the OSCE mission, Verbeke argued that the UN and EUMM will need to coordinate, and implied that the UN should take the lead. He did not offer a clear vision of that role, but has said the basic issues are no longer military, but political, and peacekeeping therefore need not be the primary focus. The general consensus in Tbilisi is that it will be difficult if not impossible to obtain another rollover of the mandate, and that therefore a new mandate would need to move beyond a purely military focus and facilitate cross-administrative boundary interactions and improvement of the human rights situation. The British ambassador proposed establishing a UN presence throughout Georgia, including both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and creating overlapping zones of operation for the UN and EUMM. The German Ambassador echoed the British plan on several specific points and raised longer-term concerns, such as control of the Sukhumi airport and port in the run-up to the Sochi Olympics. FM Vashadze told the Ambassador March 2 that the MFA is also considering UNOMIG's future and is in the process of putting together a new draft resolution for possible consideration in New York.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment. We appreciate Verbeke's initiative in raising the issue, but are concerned that he has underestimated continuing security concerns and that he may be too personally invested in giving the UN the lead. The British and German proposals contain interesting ideas, but in our first reading seem too complicated to survive the negotiation process in New York or to work on the ground. The Georgians hope that by putting together a draft resolution, they can help frame the debate in New York. We anticipate that key Allies and/or the Georgians may approach Washington policymakers over the next weeks to discuss a way ahead. In our view, one alternative that might be worth exploring would be a law enforcement mission that builds capacity to provide security along the boundaries and to protect human rights. End summary and comment.

ABKHAZ THOUGHTS

[1](#)3. (C) At a February 23 meeting, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General Johan Verbeke initially offered a readout of his discussions at the February 17-18 Geneva talks. He said that the Abkhaz de facto representatives in Geneva expressed anger that they were not more fully consulted on the language of UN Security Council Resolution [1](#)866. He thought the Abkhaz were probably angry and frustrated that the Russians let them down. In Verbeke's

estimation, the resolution was favorable overall to the Russians, but the Abkhaz were particularly unhappy with paragraph 2. (Note: Paragraph 2 of UNSCR 1866 calls for the security zones established under the 1994 Moscow agreement to be respected. Also, in a February 11 meeting with PolOff, Abkhaz de facto foreign minister Shamba did not in principle object to a new UN mandate for Abkhazia, but insisted that it must not be called a mission in Georgia. Although the text of UNSCR 1866 does not refer to Georgia, Shamba nevertheless objected even to preambular references to previous resolutions that refer to Georgia. See also ref A. End note.)

EUMM AND UNOMIG -- DIFFERENT LEVELS OF RESTRICTION

14. (C) Verbeke noted that UNSCR 1866 re-established a security zone from the Moscow agreement that was more restrictive -- essentially zero-tolerance for military personnel and equipment -- than the MoU recently signed between the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and the Georgian Ministry of Defense (refs B - D). Thus there are currently two different standards for the Georgian side of the administrative boundary, while apparently no standard exists -- or is enforced -- on the Abkhaz side. UNOMIG, for example, interprets that there are bans on overflights and on sea patrols, although the language is couched in terms of whether parameters were respected or not respected -- not in terms of violations per se. In conversations in Geneva, Verbeke told U.S. officials he had pointed out these UNSCR 1866-established restrictions, which also apply on the Abkhaz side of the boundary, to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin, who seemed taken aback. Verbeke thought the

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Russians might not have realized the implications of the resolution for their own and Abkhaz forces, which are located within the security zone and would therefore seem to be in violation; he also suspected the Russians would dispute his interpretation of the language, arguing that 1866 does not in fact reimpose the same restrictions.

THE NEW DEAL

15. (C) Verbeke underlined that thought should be given now as to how the new UN mission mandate would look -- no doubt, it would necessarily be drastically different. He stressed that the Russians are particularly "legally minded people" and so any future international presence would need to stand on legal footing. Verbeke did qualify though that no legal agreement would override the UN resolution. Verbeke solicited ideas from those present, saying that countries' representatives in NY are busy handling daily crises, and thus far no thought had yet been given to what a future UN mandate would look like. He stated his assumption that the OSCE role will be finished by the date of the new UN mission, and there will have to be one deal that can incorporate EUMM and UNOMIG. If so, then the major question would be how the two organizations would cooperate. Without saying so directly, Verbeke conveyed his own sense that the UN should play the lead role. In separate conversations with U.S. officials, Verbeke has said that the ongoing security incidents around the Abkhaz administrative boundary are political in nature, not military, and so the UN presence in Georgia need not be a peacekeeping force.

16. (C) On February 23, British Ambassador Denis Keefe offered some initial thoughts on the possible scope of a new UN presence. His proposal would create interlocking mechanisms for EUMM and UN so that monitoring zones would be overlapping and be defined so as to effectively cover the whole territory of Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The idea would be to blur any concrete idea of a boundary, which would appeal to Georgians' sense of territorial integrity. The implementing UNSCR would explicitly endorse the EUMM, and although he foresaw no OSCE

presence, the plan would call on the UN to consult with both the OSCE and the EU. There would be notification requirements of units/heavy equipment within the Abkhaz restricted zone, using the EUMM/GEO MOU as a model (refs B, C). There would be a five party Incident Prevention Mechanism linked to a Code of Conduct of operation of checkpoints near the administrative boundary lines. UN police support offices would provide training, investigation and reporting. Some creative elements included giving the populations within certain zones the choice of which ID document to use, including possibly a UN-issued document, and giving the UN mission the authority to license schools within certain zones. Keefe cautioned that these ideas were his own, but noted that he would be sharing them with London.

17. (C) German Ambassador Patricia Flor said on February 23 that her government had already circulated and cleared at senior levels relevant proposals. Although the German plan does not cover South Ossetia, on March 2 she noted the importance of considering South Ossetia in New York, considering the possible expiry of the OSCE mandate. She saw several points of commonality with the British plan. In particular, she said both would cover the following areas: freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line; freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line; human rights monitoring (to include IDP returns, property rights, education); operating rules for the restricted zone beyond limitation of forces; linking any new mandate with strategy and tactical points outlined in the cease-fire agreement; balancing the delicate issue of getting information out of Abkhazia while also meeting the Georgian need to control information; and linking the EUMM to the UN mission in making decisions. Flor stressed the need to broaden the possibilities of control, possibly to some kind of international body, even if in the end they would be negotiated away. A specific example was control mechanisms for Sukhumi airport and seaport, if and when they ever re-open, which would be especially important in the run-up to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

18. (C) At the March 2 meeting, the Ambassador pointed out that, as it considers options in New York, the international community must not lose sight of the fact that Russia, as one of the belligerents, is not a fair broker in the conflict. At the February 23 meeting, Charge noted the importance of balancing tactical objective with strategic goals. While pursuing the immediate objective of improved security, the international community should take care not to compromise the larger principle of territorial integrity.

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COMMENT

19. (C) Although Verbeke is still formulating his ideas, he is proceeding from the assumptions that the OSCE will leave Georgia and the EUMM will never gain access to Abkhazia. Whether because of the UN's long-established presence in Georgia or his own personal stake in the mission's continued success, Verbeke clearly sees his organization as the most important international presence in Georgia, and the one with which EUMM must coordinate, not vice versa. His downplaying of the ongoing security incidents is troublesome; although the attacks clearly have a political purpose, they still represent a real security threat that maintains the area around Abkhazia in a state of instability. The UN clearly has an important role to play, but so does the EUMM. The British and German plans, while including several interesting ideas and laudable goals, seem too complicated to survive what will surely be a contentious negotiation in New York, not to mention actual implementation -- especially the British idea to expand the UN's mandate to all of Georgia. It seems to us that a somewhat less ambitious and more focused role for the UN than that envisaged by Verbeke, the British or the Germans is more likely to be acceptable in New York and to succeed on the ground. It must provide for

improvements in security, but it must go beyond that as well to repair the damaged relationships. One possibility might be a law enforcement-focused mission, that would enable local law enforcement to provide a more secure environment, protect human rights, facilitate orderly boundary crossings, and eventually increase the frequency of cross-boundary cooperation. Verbeke will want to discuss his ideas, and hear ours, during a proposed visit to Washington in the coming weeks (no date yet set). We anticipate that key European Allies and our Georgian colleagues will also want to begin the discussion of what comes next for UNOMIG, well in advance of the June 15 expiration of the mandate.

TEFFT